Washington Sentinel.

EDITED BY
WM. M. OVERTON, CH. MAURICE SMITH, AND BEVERLEY TUCKER.

CITY OF WASHINGTON.

FEBRUARY 16, 1854.

☞ MR. GEORGE E. FRENCH, Bookseller, King street, Alexandria, is our authorized agent to receive advertisements and subscriptions. Single numbers can be procured at his counter every morning.

☞ MR. E. K. LUNDY, bookseller, Bridge street, Georgetown, will act as agent for the Sentinel in receiving subscriptions and advertisements.

☞ GEORGE W. MEARSON is our authorized agent to receive subscriptions and advertisements, in Washington, Georgetown and Alexandria.

CONGRESS.

In the Senate, yesterday, the French spoliation bill was passed. Mr. Houston concluded his remarks in opposition to the Nebraska bill. Mr. Douglas's amendment to the 14th section, declaring the Missouri compromise to be inconsistent with the principles of non-intervention established by the acts of 1850, was adopted—yeas 35, nays 10. Mr. Badger has the floor to-day.

In the House of Representatives the homestead bill was taken up as the special order, and several speeches were delivered not connected with this subject.

CONGRESSIONAL NON-INTERVENTION.

It is with us a matter of rejoicing that every mail that comes, brings us, from all sections of the country, able arguments and earnest appeals in behalf of the Nebraska bill. The true and conservative press of the north, south, east, and west all join in giving hearty and cordial support to the principles of the Nebraska bill, as a final and equitable settlement of the slavery question. Now and then we find a paper violent in its opposition; but, as a general thing, wherever we find opposition, there also we find abolitionism and sectionalism. We find the papers opposing the Nebraska bill generally conducted by men conspicuous for nothing but their love of agitation and discord; men who have always followed such leaders as Messrs. Seward, Sumner, Chase, Rantoul, Greeley, and Giddings. We are of those who believe that in a free country the press is the true exponent of public sentiment; and, believing this, we are fully assured that the loyal and patriotic people throughout the Union are in favor of the non-intervention principle, as the only just settlement of the question of slavery.

This principle of non-intervention is not at all a new one; it is as old as the government itself. It is founded in the doctrine of strict construction, which is the great safeguard of the rights of the States and of the liberties of the people. It is coeval with the Constitution, which declares that the powers not delegated to the United States by the Constitution, nor prohibited to the States, are reserved to the States respectively, or to the people, and that "the citizens of each State shall be entitled to all the privileges and immunities of citizens in the several States." It is a strange doctrine, and a doctrine entirely contrary to the Constitution, that one State in this Union has a right to decide whether or not it will have slavery, and that the people of another State cannot have the right to judge for themselves in a matter so deeply interesting to them.

If the people of Virginia, and of Massachusetts, and of California have a right to decide whether they will or will not have slavery, why is it that under a Constitution that guaranties to each of the States equal rights and privileges, that the people of Nebraska and Kansas cannot determine for themselves the same question when they form a State government? And how can they exercise that right freely and without coercion, unless non-intervention prevails during their territorial pupilage? If slavery is excluded from a territory by Congressional action, that action settles the question of slavery when the territory becomes a State, and the right of the people of the territory to determine the character of their institutions by their State constitution is a cheat and a delusion—a shadow without substance.

Do the advocates of a restrictive policy hold that a State constitution which allows slavery within its limits is anti-republican, and therefore contrary to the provisions of the Constitution, which "guaranties to every State a republican form of government?" If so, how is it that, at the formation of the confederacy, every one of the States recognised the institution of slavery? The men who framed the Constitution surely understood its provisions; and if it had been unconstitutional to admit slave-holding States, then States holding slaves could not have entered the Union.

The very fact of slave-holding States having been admitted into the Union utterly refutes any such doctrine. If it is contrary to the Constitution for a State to recognise slavery, then Congress must require not only that Nebraska and Kansas and the States west of the Mississippi and north of 36° 30′ shall not be admitted with slaves, but they must also enact and require the southern slave-holding States to abolish slavery.

Has anybody the boldness to advance such a proposition? And yet it is plain that, under a Constitution that secures equal rights to the citizens of every State, that if slavery be prohibited by Congress in one State, it cannot be allowed in another, and *vice versa*. If slavery be allowed in one State under the Constitution, it must be allowed in all.

The Constitution makes no geographical distinction, but declares plainly and unequivocally that each State shall enjoy equal rights and privileges. The abolition press, headed by the *National Era*, the New York *Times*, and *Tribune*, charges that the friends of the Nebraska bill wish to hurry it through Congress without due deliberation, and against the will of a majority of the people of the country. A desperate case requires desperate expedients, and therefore we are not at all surprised at this effrontery on the part of a press that was never yet known to advocate anything national or for the benefit of the country, nor to allude but in terms of bitter denunciation to one portion of the confederacy. We do not wish to push this bill through Congress against the will of the people. That will has been expressed in favor of the principle involved in the Nebraska bill in the adoption of the federal Constitution; in the approval of the compromise of 1850; and in the election of Franklin Pierce to the Presidency upon a platform of principles embodied in certain resolutions, among which are the following:

"*Resolved*, 1*st*. That the federal government is one of limited powers, derived solely from the Constitution, and the grants of power therein ought to be strictly construed by all the departments of the government; and that it is inexpedient and dangerous to exercise doubtful constitutional powers."

"9th. That Congress has no power under the Constitution to interfere with or control the domestic institutions of the several States, and that such States are the sole and proper judges of everything appertaining to their own affairs not prohibited by the Constitution."

The press, too, at this time tells us that the people are in favor of this measure. Why, then, should Congress delay, when delay will allow the abolitionists and factionists time to get up an excitement on the subject? The question, the constitutional question, has been settled; and it but remains for Congress now to carry its principles into operation.

JOHN VAN BUREN'S LETTER TO COL. CLEMENS.

We publish to-day the letter recently addressed by John Van Buren to Hon. Jeremiah Clemens, of Alabama. Mr. Van Buren's letter is a real genuine Van Buren letter. In the first sentence it admits that the motives which induced its author to mount the Baltimore platform were of such a character as would not bear explanation. What was the character of those motives? What their nature and complexion?

It seems to us that Mr. Van Buren, cunning and crafty as he is, has furnished us a clue by means of which we may answer the questions we have propounded. In the first place he states that, when he took position on the Baltimore platform, he lost thereby the respect and esteem of some of his best and truest friends. Who were they who withdrew their confidence and esteem from Mr. Van Buren because of that movement? Assuredly they were the most factious portion of his freesoil and abolition followers. That is plain. Then Mr. Van Buren affirms that he could have made an explanation which would have saved him from loss, and that he forbore to make that explanation because it would have inflicted injury in another direction; all of which, reduced to plain English means just this, according to our humble understanding: Mr. John Van Buren sustained the Pierce and King ticket under the guidance of motives, which were misinterpreted by a portion of his freesoil and abolition followers; those motives, if fully and properly explained, would have been satisfactory to his freesoil and abolition followers and prevented the censures which they bestowed on him; but the explanation could not be made without an exposure which would have called forth censure from another quarter, wounding the democratic party by revealing the nature of Mr. Van Buren's real purposes and thwarting his ulterior designs. In other words, Mr. Van Buren intended to bamboozle the public, under the impulse of motives and to accomplish purposes which he could not avow and was forced to conceal.

But now Mr. Van Buren gives his interpretation of the Baltimore platform, and that interpretation is given in a very few words. According to his exposition, the only stipulation entered into at Baltimore touching slavery was a stipulation to "drop the subject." This commentary has surely the merit of brevity, but we can perceive no other merit in it; for if we understand the action of the Baltimore convention, it adopted *a principle of settlement* which should be adhered to *as a means* of forcing agitators to drop the subject-matter of agitation. The democratic party bound itself to resist the agitation of the slavery question in and out of Congress; but, before doing that, it adopted *a rule of action* to be strictly adhered to *as the means of suppressing agitation*. It sanctioned the principle of non-intervention as a full, final, and complete settlement, adequate, if adhered to and enforced in the true spirit, to take care of the slavery question in all time to come.

But Mr. Van Buren repudiates the principle of non-intervention; he repudiates that portion of the Baltimore platform which relates to the process by which factious agitation should be ended, and insists that there was only a simple naked stipulation to drop the subject. This is real unadulterated Van Burenism—a cunning, very cunning, exceedingly cunning attempt to throw the responsibility on other shoulders of the factious course which Mr. Van Buren has determined to pursue. But cunning sometimes overreaches itself, exposing its own faithlessness to its intended dupes and victims. It is so in the present instance; for Mr. Van Buren's artful epistle has served to open the eyes of many who had been deluded by the freesoil professions at Syracuse last November, and made them understand what Mr. Van Buren meant when he said on that occasion that *he had not read the resolutions*.

Mr. Van Buren says, further, that it is proposed to repeal the restrictive clause of the Missouri compromise on the ground that it is either *already repealed* or *never existed*; that it was *superseded* by the compromise of 1850, or *is unconstitutional*; and he proceeds then to make the declaration that a repeal for any of these reasons would be *a flagrant breach of party faith*. This is strange reasoning to us. We may be dull of comprehension, but we cannot understand how a breach of party faith can be committed by repealing a law that has been *already repealed*, or by repealing a law that *never existed*, or by repealing a law that has already *been superseded* by a subsequent law, or by repealing a law that *is in violation of the Constitution*. Mr. Van Buren says that the breach of party faith consists in the fact that a repeal of the restrictive clause of the Missouri compromise for any of these reasons would be *entirely unnecessary*. But the repeal is necessary; for if the Nebraska bill should pass without the repealing clause, Mr. Van Buren and his freesoil and abolition followers would swear most lustily that the Missouri compromise had *never* been repealed, that it *exists* in full force and virtue, that it *was not* superseded by the compromise of 1850, and that it *is not* unconstitutional. In this behalf we do not undertake to foretell the future; for the freesoilers and abolitionists, in and out of Congress, have already taken this position.

We cannot perceive that merely *unnecessary* legislation is a breach of party faith, unless Mr. Van Buren thinks it is a grievous wrong that the Nebraska bill has been so shaped as to test the sincerity and expose the hypocrisy of the faction to which he belongs. If the faith of the democratic party has ever been pledged to any such concealment, we demand to know when and where the pledge was made, and the names of the men who dared to enter into any such disgraceful and degrading stipulation in the name and on behalf of the democratic party. But we have already given as much importance to Mr. Van Buren's letter as it deserves; and we conclude this article by appending the letter itself, so that every one can read and interpret for himself:

"MY DEAR CLEMENS: * * * * The position I took on the Baltimore platform lost me the respect and esteem of some of my truest and best friends; but, so long as I knew it to be wise and just, I submitted to this loss without a murmur, or even an explanation, which would have saved me but injured our cause. The convenant of peace on the slavery question, entered into at Baltimore, I thought wise for the country and indispensable for the democratic party. Northern and southern democrats differ, utterly differ, on the whole subject of slavery. What, then, can be done? Why, drop the subject; it is the only way to avoid a quarrel. This was agreed to be done at Baltimore; and now, in open and palpable violation of this agreement, it is proposed to repeal or supersede the prohibition of slavery in the Missouri Territory, and to repeal it on the ground that it is either already repealed, or never existed; that it was superseded by the compromise of 1850, or is unconstitutional. If either of the reasons be true, the act is a flagrant breach of party faith, for the assured reason that the act itself is entirely unnecessary. Could anything but a desire to buy the south at the presidential shambles dictate such an outrage? Now there are but two men who can do any good in this crisis—one is General Cass, the other yourself. If you will agree to the Nebraska bill of last year, it will be promptly and triumphantly passed. I know Gen. Cass is committed to the theory of non-intervention. I am sorry for it. I think the theory unsound. It is an idea of self-government; and in expressing the idea you overthrow the whole theory by imposing a government on the Territory. States have a right of self-government; Territories have not. But I don't want to argue this. General Cass can surely take this ground, *i. e.*, that the Baltimore platform forbids the enactment or repeal of any law upon the subject of slavery; and the repeal of the Missouri prohibition is unnecessary, because General Cass thinks it unconstitutional, and will leave it to the courts so to hold. These views, and the fact that the people of Nebraska want the old bill, and that the House by two to one passed it last year, and that Atchison of the Senate went for it, would give General Cass fair standing ground in doing what I am sure he sees to be right. You, as a southern man, could advocate it to ensure peace and good will for the south. It is vital to them to live up to their agreement. They would be worse off to beat us than to be beat; the sting left behind would be fatal hereafter. Do you not think so? * * * *

"Yours, truly, J. VAN BUREN.

"There is one idea in my head which I ought to have put in my letter. The theory of non-intervention, as applied to the Nebraska Territory, demands the repeal of the law prohibiting slavery in Nebraska. The same theory, of course, requires the repeal of all laws of Congress establishing slavery. Now, slavery in the District of Columbia exists by the laws of Congress alone. The Maryland and Virginia laws upholding it are repealed. The non-intervention theory, as now construed, abolishes slavery in the District of Columbia. Upon strict State-rights doctrine, too, it would repeal the fugitive slave law. J. V. B.

"February 3, 1854."

THE LABORS OF LEGISLATORS.

The January number of the Edinburg Review contains a very learned, elaborate, and interesting article on the subject of "The Machinery of Parliamentary Legislation." The writer manifests a thorough acquaintance with the subject of legislation, and of parliamentary forms and modes of proceeding. He illustrates his subject by frequent references to the modes of proceeding in our House of Representatives, with which he seems to have an intimate acquaintance. He recommends some reforms which would no doubt tend greatly to facilitate business.

The labors of the members of the English Parliament are onerous, almost oppressive. The two houses comprise upwards of eleven hundred members. But it is complained that there is not such a classification of members, and such an organization of committees, as to make them effective and to equalize labor.

The reviewer says:

"In order to estimate the importance of an efficient organization of the labors of Parliament, it will be necessary to pass them under review, to point out their extent and variety, and to explain the arduous duties and engagements of its members. As the main burden of public business falls upon the House of Commons, our attention will be more particularly directed to its proceedings. Of its labors and endurance, the last session will supply numerous illustrations.

"The Parliament was assembled on the 4th of November, 1852, and was prorogued on the 20th of August, 1853. The leaves of autumn had not fallen when it met; the leaves of another summer had begun to fall before it had concluded its laborious sittings. The session extended over a period of 290 days; during which the House of Commons sat, for despatch of business, 160 days, and was occupied 1,193 hours 14 minutes; of which 133½ hours were after midnight. The average of each day's sitting was rather less than 7½ hours; but a glance at Mr. Brotherton's detailed return will fall upon a column, showing that upon numerous occasions, during the last two months of the session, the House continued sitting for upwards of 15 hours out of the 24! For example: on the 5th of July the House met at 12 o'clock, and adjourned on the following morning at ¼ before 4, having divided no less than five times after midnight, upon Mr. Keating's ill-timed motion on dock-yard promotions. And on several other days the House met at 12, and, with a suspension of business for two hours only in the afternoon, adjourned between 3 and 4 o'clock on the following morning.

"The bare statement of these unseasonable hours suggests feelings of weariness and exhaustion. What court could administer justice with temper for fourteen hours? Where are the men of business who could usefully confer upon their own affairs for so many hours? Even the poor literary drudge, writing for his daily bread, would fail under labors so long sustained. Yet members of parliament are found to endure them, month after month, and the public rarely hear of their sufferings."

But besides their laborious attendance upon sittings of the House, they are occupied day after day with their absorbing and confining duties in committee. The announcement that the "speaker is at prayers," releases them from their committee-rooms, but introduces their no less irksome and laborious occupations in the House.

We have not space for extracts from this able and interesting parliamentary history. No one can read it without instruction and profit.

☞ The following stinging satire, written by Clement Caraguel, and published in a late number of the Paris *Charivari*, is copied into the *Republicain*, a French paper of New York, from which we translate:

THE CZAR IS ONLY GREAT
BECAUSE YOU ARE ON YOUR KNEES. BOW DOWN!

M. de Riancey, who is not less solicitous for Russia than his coadjutor, M. Laurentie, proves this morning that it is the attitude of the western powers which seriously hazards the peace of Europe. By the western powers must be understood England and France. They are the western powers which sent Prince Menschikoff to Constantinople. It is they who suddenly, and in a time of profound peace, crossed the Pruth, and invaded the Danubian principalities. It is they who exhausted the patience of the plenipotentiaries of Vienna, bombarded Sinope, and sunk a Turkish squadron.

It is by such acts that they have irritated the Emperor Nicholas to such a degree, that it will hereafter be quite difficult to get him to listen to reason. The entry of the fleets into the Black sea and the circular of the minister of foreign affairs have pushed the difficulty to its extreme point.

There was one thing more to be done, M. de Riancey said, if there was a desire to preserve peace. An embassy must be sent to the Emperor Nicholas, the members of which should make the journey from Paris to St. Petersburg on foot, clad in long shirts and with ropes about their necks. Arrived at St. Petersburg, they should kiss the steps of the imperial palace, and prostrate themselves, face to the earth, before the emperor. The members of the embassy should carry with them their wives and children, who should pull their hair with cries of despair, while imploring the clemency of the czar. This prince is not a tiger, and probably he would be moved by the tears of these women and children. It was thus that the anger of Coriolanus was formerly appeased. But if this does not suffice, they must present to Nicholas, on a silver plate, the keys of all the cities of France and England, as an evidence of their submission.

Instead of permitting the presses of Paris and London to envenom the difficulty by malevolent and passionate comments, the servile bards of the two countries should be ordered to sing the praises of the emperor. They must glorify his handsome form; the whiteness of his teeth; his appetite; the excellence of his stomach; his taste for the fine arts; his munificence; and the enlightened protection which he accords to letters and the sciences.

Nothing would be easier than to have a prize cantata in his honor, the music of which should be written by one of our first composers, and which should be performed every evening in all our theatres. It will be requisite to shut up in a kennel the dog of the theatre *La Gaiete*, whose business it is to bite the Cossacks; and, in arranging the characters of the play in which he figures, to determine that hereafter the Cossacks are to whip the French. The dog must afterwards be forwarded to the emperor at St. Petersburg, who will have him sent to the mines of Siberia.

I would have, moreover, adds M. de Riancey, a subscription opened throughout France, the proceeds of which will serve to buy a large number of boxes of candles, to be given as new-year presents to the Cossacks.

Who is the man that could resist such marks of sympathy and respect? The Emperor of Russia less than any other; for this prince's greatness of soul, disinterestedness, and generosity are well known.

At this cost we should very probably avoid war, which is now so imminent. And who can foresee all the scourges which will follow in its train? Let us mention only the hydra of anarchy, which will reopen its hundred mouths at the first cannon-shot. Massacrinski, the revolutionist, is already rubbing his hands; and he is right to do so, the brigand! But the saddest of the matter is, that all this will derange the plans for the Fusion. Ah, the generosity of the czar has been very much abused! The ambition of the western powers has conducted Europe to the edge of a precipice. I ask at least that a mattress be placed at the bottom of the hole into which we are about to fall.

SENSIBLE VIEWS.

The Evansville (Indiana) *Enquirer*, in expressing its views in relation to the Nebraska bill, uses the following language:

"Considering this as a Constitional question, we have only to ask: Has Congress any right to exact anything from a new State, except that it shall be a republic, and shall support the Constitution? Has Congress a right to say to the people of a territory, you shall not employ slave labor? Shall Congress say that California may come in without slavery, and Nebraska shall not come in with slavery? Does the Constitution give Congress the right to prescribe the institutions which they shall adopt, to the people of a Territory?

"Indiana came in as a free State; suppose that the sovereign people should now desire to adopt slavery, have they not a right to do it? If Congress may legislate on this question, it may legislate both ways, and may refuse to admit free States as well as slave States. The only ground, then, for us to take is that established by the compromise of 1850—*that the people of the Territories shall decide this question for themselves.* This is the only constitutional and only common sense ground."

ONE OF THE SIGNS OF THE TIMES.

To show the favor with which the Nebraska bill is viewed, and the high opinion entertained of Judge Douglas's masterly speech on it, we would state that between eighty and ninety thousand copies of Judge Douglas's speech, in pamphlet form, have thus far been ordered at the *Sentinel* office, by private subscription of members of the two houses of Congress. We do not doubt that many more will be ordered, and to that end we design keeping the types standing.

ROMANCE IN REAL LIFE.

It is rare that fiction paints so romantic a tale as will be found in another column of occurrences in California. The arrival and splendid triumphs of Miss Heron have scarcely a parallel in dramatic history. The lady is well known in this city, and not less appreciated for her private excellence than admired in her professional capacity. May she have health to sustain her in her arduous duties, and may fortune as well as fame crown her labors.

EDINBURG REVIEW.

We have received from Taylor & Maury the January number of the Edinburg Review, (American edition.) It is filled with able and interesting articles. The table of contents is as follows: Lord John Russell's Memorials of Mr. Fox and the Buckingham Papers; the Blind, their Works and Ways; Ecclesiastical Economy; Public Works in the Presidency of Madras; Government Education; Measures for Rich and Poor; Thackeray's Works; the Machinery of Parliamentary Legislation; the Ottoman Empire.

MRS. GLADSTANE'S BENEFIT.

That accomplished and popular actress, Mrs. Gladstane, who has done so much to render the Variete a place of delightful resort, intends taking her benefit to-night. The whole strength and talent of the company, including Mr. Goodall, will be brought into requisition on that occasion. The bill is very attractive, and no effort will be spared to make it unusually successful. Mrs. Gladstane has won a right to a crowded house. We hope that the public will be mindful of her claims.

From the San Francisco Chronicle.

Dramatic Retrospect.
MISS MATILDA HERON.

We have frequently, during the last three weeks, spoken of the young lady whose name is placed above; but the character of her advent, her qualities, career, and the sensation she has produced among us, take the shape of an event above mere desultory treatment, and worthy of deliberate reflection and review.

California is the place for wonders. A miracle in itself, it communicates a quickening influence to everything great, and developes merit with the rapidity of magic.

California is the place for genius. Existing under a condition altogether novel and peculiar; filled with a ratio of intelligence that distances comparison; owning a population whose agitated lives have made them profound observers of the passions, it is eminently qualified to appreciate originality on the stage, to establish its own standard of excellence, and to have that standard received and respected by the world.

California is the place where moral worth and modest merit receive their proper estimation. Sick of license, disgusted with the reckless prologue of a disordered opening, and tired of mere meretricious glare, it eagerly encourages all rectifying examples, and invites noble emulation in the way of conduct, by consecrating goodness.

Eureka! California has had the fortune to show all this within the last four weeks by the discovery of a new star; it has been its merit to detect an unappreciated gem, and to bring forward one who, we believe, is destined in her chosen walk to be the foremost woman of her time.

Four weeks ago, Matilda Heron landed quietly upon our shores. She was not only unannounced, but, it may be said, she was without a name; and, when chronicled among the record of arrivals, was passed by as one without any social or professional identity.

Since that time she has played twelve nights in the test characters of the tragic drama; and, after a success unparalleled, closed with a reputation which places her at the very pinnacle of fame. The unknown stranger has become the most prominent personage in her calling, and, what is most striking, has established herself in the very hearts of the best portion of the community. Never have we seen a popular enthusiasm more fervid and unremitting than what she has created. Night after night her houses have not only been filled, but crowded, and the ardent thousands who have contributed to her applause seem to have been governed by a feeling of direct and active personal interest in her welfare. Genius alone can excite such a sentiment as this, and they who win it have reason to thank Heaven, for they are the favored of the gods.

It may strike some who have not seen Miss Heron, and who have been arrested by the ardor which has inspired her audiences in her behalf, that all this is very strange, and they may wonder how she got such footing in a land which never heard her name. But there is nothing so simple as the impulses of the public heart, and the results which flow from its sudden action are mysteries only to those who have not heart enough to understand them. Let us find the reason.

Miss Heron, a lady born and bred, gifted in intellect, educated and accomplished, but reared in a strictly religious home, made her first efforts after fame in the field of poetry and literature; but, though successful to a fair extent, the applause which she received was not prompt and palpable enough for her practical and ardent mind. The stage presented the means by which she could challenge an immediate examination of her genius; and, once imbued with this idea, it became, as is the rule with all strong natures, an inseparable portion of the machinery of her thought. The remonstrances of her family, thoes of filial devotion, the dissuasion of friends, though all tenderly considered, were inferior to what she felt to the pressure of her fate; and, in despite of herself, she knew that the current of ambition on which she had embarked must bear her onward to some definite result, beyond all power of resistance or reconsideration. From a dreamer she became a student, and, by means of an independent fund of her own, devoted herself to three years of laborious tuition under Mr. Peter Richings, in the private philosophy of the stage.

She made her first appearance in Philadelphia, two years ago, in the character of Bianca, and gained the unqualified applause of a full and critical audience. Indeed her whole engagement was fulfilled with credit, but the dead weight of public doubt which attaches to a *debutante*, and the lack of clap-trap and "capping," which so often makes practised inferiority successful, prevented her from creating that sensation which her merits deserved, and which many who heard her, had they not been too timid to embark their opinions, would have been glad to express. Another engagement followed at the Washington theatre, where she performed the leading business under the management of Mr. Fleming. She next appeared at Baltimore; then at Boston; and finally performed a prolonged one, as leading actress, at the Bowery theatre in New York.

All these engagements occupied, together, about two years; but they were separated by long intervals of illness, the last one prostrating her for several months. At each of these periods her friends renewed their endeavors to dissuade her from pursuing her profession, but her ambition seemed only to grow the stronger from bodily affliction; and, more clearly than they, she saw that, despite of all will of her own, her future was fixed. The consuming passion—the same which once governed and sustained a Siddons and an O'Neil—gave her the power to resist; and, in order to grasp a period of length, during which she might be free from importunity and give her destiny its chance, she rose prematurely from her sick bed, and, taking with her but a female servant to whom she was attached, placed herself under the charge of Mr. George Lewis, as her theatrical agent, and, after two days' preparation, set sail for California. Unfortunately, Mr. Lewis died on the passage up from the Isthmus, and she landed here alone.

Depressed by the loneliness of her condition; mistrusting the visitation as a rebuke for her wayward ambition, and discouraged by an accumulation of minor obstacles, which were too great for her mere woman's nature to withstand, she sat down, and, to use her own woman's language, had "a good long cry," and resolved to return home (without trying her fortune here) by the next steamer. But, while affairs were in this condition, her name attracted the attention of a few literary gentlemen, who had heard of her antecedents, and who had perused evidences of her intellectual abilities. They at once presented themselves to her, and persuaded her to stay, promising that she should not only have a creditable engagement, but a full house to receive her; after which her loneliness and want of prestige would be at an end. She consented, and an engagement was obtained for her at the American theatre, for six nights, to begin on the evening of Monday the 26th December.

The time was unpropitious, and the circumstances discouraging. The Metropolitan, now the most gorgeous theatre in the United States, and for which the impatient community had long been waiting, was to be opened the same night, with Mr. Murdoch and Mrs. Sinclair; while the fagged-out company of the American, badly gleaned by the new establishment, were on the point of ending their engagements, and closing up the house.

Nevertheless, on the night of the 26th December, the American theatre was filled to see the friendless candidate for popular applause. A burst of welcome greeted her entrance, and then the house subsided into a state of nervous anxiety, such as, perhaps, was never felt before for a person so entirely unknown. She spoke; a profound silence followed, which showed that every mind was working on her merits. She spoke again, and a breath of satisfaction and relief could be audibly distinguished. At length the progress of the piece brought her to one of those points which enables her to show, in pathos, the deep harmonious music of the soul; and then burst forth a cheer that made the building shake. Suspense was over; she was received into the innermost appreciations of her audience, and all concern for her future success, by those who had assumed the responsibility of an opinion in advance, was lost in an enthusiasm that knew no bounds. Her triumph was not confined to the front; even the actresses embraced and kissed her, and she was equally petted before and behind the curtain.

The next morning the newspapers came out, with one accord, in unstinted praise; all placing her in the topmost rank of the profession, and some claiming that no performance of equal excellence was within the powers of any actress on the stage.

This striking circumstance and grand acclaim excited public curiosity, and then became known those circumstances of private excellence and untoward fortune which had so interested the few who had taken pains to secure her a favorable opening. The calamity of her agent's death was turned into a blessing, for it gave her the adoption of the people; and the mislocation of such a gem in a worn-out house and company was to prove to be a stroke of fortune. At the American, the power of her attractions was undeniable; but her success at the Metropolitan would have been confounded with the blandishments of gay upholstery and the natural enticements of a new establishment. The people were satisfied; and, being interested by the refreshing novelty of merit and private worth united in a person who had come to them unpuffed, they resolved to take her into their protection. When the people undertake anything of this sort, they never do it by halves; and that motive, built upon and united with her transcendent genius, were the joint reasons we set out to give for the mysterious *furore* which so puzzled the good folk who had not been present at her first appearance, and who thus far have not seen her.

On the second night of her engagement she appeared as the "Countess," in the play of *Love*, and on the third, united the characters of "Mrs. Haller" in the *Stranger* and "Juliana" in the *Honeymoon*. The proceeds of this night were to be allotted to the widow of Mr. George Lewis, the agent who had died on his way from the Isthmus. And here a word.

Miss Heron had suggested that some action should be taken by the profession in San Francisco in memory of a man who had been connected with the stage for twenty years, and who had strained his means to associate with the profession here. But one house was "tied up" for some time with engagements; the other suggested insuperable obstacles for at least four weeks; whereupon an idea suddenly irradiated her countenance, and with characteristic ardor she exclaimed: "Ah I know a way which will obviate all difficulties. *I* am entitled to a benefit this week, and Mrs. Lewis can have *mine*. It comes on Saturday night, but if I can have it now, the proceeds can go by Thursday's steamer, and she will be relieved without delay!" This noble conduct, struck from the soul under circumstances which forbid all suspicion of artifice, became known through members of the company the following day, and before night a number of gentlemen spontaneously contributed to the purchase of a diamond cross for the generous girl, as an appropriate reward of an act of such pious and munificent charity.

We do not recollect ever to have beheld a scene of equal excitement in a theatre as the one exhibited during the presentation of that jewel. Ignorant of what was to be said or done, (for the whole arrangement was but a few hours old,) Miss Heron was called before the curtain with Mr. Baker. The whole house rose, and her arrival at the centre of the stage was the signal of a shower of *bouquets*, too numerous to be gathered, and which literally deluged her feet. "What will she do with them all?" said a voice during a momentary lull. "She'll walk upon them!" was the answer of a dozen, and three cheers endorsed the sentiment. At this moment a large and magnificent bunch of flowers was handed by a gentleman from the crowded corner of the orchestra, on the top of which glittered the sparkling present, and beside it a note which Mr. Baker was requested to read. We will give it here, at the expense of recapitulation, not only because it furnishes a popular endorsement of the sentiments of this article, but also for the reason that we wish to put on record, in its proper connexion, a circumstance which we are convinced will be a feature of interest in the prologue of a history the future passages of which will occupy the attention of the entire country. The note, as read by Mr. Baker, contained these words:

"DEAR YOUNG LADY: A few among the thousands whom your merits have already made your friends in California desire to present you this small evidence of their esteem. It is a symbol of the religion you profess, and we trust that while it reminds you of your faith, it will at the same time be received as a pledge that genius never can be friendless on these shores."

It was a beautiful thing to witness the emotion which flitted over the speaking countenance of the agitated girl, as she listened to these words. All sorts of weather came from her eyes, and, alternately laughing and crying, she made the following fresh and unique reply, as taken by the reporters:

"Now what shall I do? Ladies and gentlemen, the position of a speech-maker does not belong to a lady; nor was it my intention, when led forward by Mr. Baker, to raise my voice. Let me assure you that this is the first time in my life that I have ever uttered a word on this side of the curtain. But I must tell you how happy you have made me. Your kindness has completely overcome me. You have, in fact, made me a child, and I cannot find language to address you as I should. I feel as if I had lost my *manhood*. I cannot speak my gratitude. This beautiful gift, rich as it is in its jewels, has yet a richer value for me—that of being the gift of kind, good, and dear friends. And I value it, too, as the emblém of that religion which has always been my guide, my hope, and consolation. Whenever I gaze at it, however often I may otherwise think of you, it will serve to turn my thoughts to Heaven in prayer for your welfare and happiness. I can only repeat my sincere and heartfelt thanks."

We shall not provoke failure by attempting to describe what followed. It was the installation of genius; nay, it was more like the consecration of a saint. She was lodged firmly in the hearts of that transported audience, and, to use the expression of one perturbed spirit, who in his ecstacy refused any further connexion with his hat, "six yoke of oxen could not drag her out of it."

The proceeds of this benefit were $1,600, just double the value of the cross, and on the following morning the superb donation went by the steamer to its worthy destination.

"Bianca," "Julia," in the *Hunchback*, and "Mariana," were the concluding personations of the week, and the last house was more crowded than the first. At the conclusion of her term, the management at once offered Miss Heron a new engagement, on her own terms, and Mrs. Sinclair tendered her the Metropolitan, on equally favorable conditions. Both, however, were for the time declined; whereupon Mr. Baker generously made acknowledgment of the service which Miss Heron had rendered him in keeping his house open against the powerful attraction of the Metropolitan, by a check of $500 beyond the terms of the week.

On Monday, the 2d instant, Miss Heron returned the kindness of Mrs. Baker, by performing the part of "Juliet," for her benefit; and on the following Monday, "Margaret Elmore," for the benefit of Mrs. Judah. Three nights devoted to repetitions of "Bianca," the "Countess," and "Margaret Elmore," followed; and on Friday last she took her farewell benefit as "Mariana," in *The Wife*.

The salient points of Miss Heron's California career may, therefore, be summed up as follows: A debut among strangers, without a prestige; twelve triumphant performances; two occasions, when the sale of tickets was stopped in the afternoon; and a benefit at the conclusion, when despite of storms, of the counter attractions of a grand oratorio at the Musical Hall, and an imposing military display at the Metropolitan, she, on the short notice of a day, drew a densely crowded house. She has therefore won every description of endorsement, as well from actors as from the public and the press; and she stands a fixed dramatic identity—a dazzling star, whose radiance will always shine pre-eminent, by whatever constellation it may be surrounded.

The extent to which we have unwittingly been led, in describing Miss Heron's march, cuts the us of our attention of a full review of the peculiar characteristic and merits of her style. Briefly, however, on that, at the risk of tediousness, we beg to say a word.

The first impression of those who have heard the general encomiums on Miss Heron's acting will, when they see her, be one of disappointment. "She is very tame," will be first idea. "I do not like that turn of expression," may be the next, "and then her voice—oh that is weak, deficient for the greater passions; and, besides, she is not handsome." And some may perhaps stop at the end of the first scene, with the reflection: "Well, well, is this the woman whom all this fuss has been made about?"

By-and-by, however, as she warms with her subject and begins to mingle with the character, a flash will come to make the observer stir in his seat; then another, which will oblige him to contribute in earnest to the profound silence she has already imposed upon the rest of her audience; and, presently, he will be starting with involuntary exclamations of "*that's* good!" and helping her heartily at proper intervals with his hands.

The second act may make him say: "It is true she is not what would be called handsome, but then there is a profound thoughtfulness and latent grandeur in her face, which at times make her look really beautiful. I must admit, too, that her neck and shoulders are superb, while her arm has all the refined perfection of the classic marble."

It may require five acts to get accustomed to her voice, and then it will grow like music, and mingle with her exquisite elocution like the soft notes of the nightingale with the liquid fall and cadence of a brook. These were the impressions she first made on us, and we believe they were common to all who have seen her. Her manner at the outset is so quiet as to seem too tame, and there is no trace, under the deep naturalness of her art, of those bold artistic evidences for which we have been accustomed to look. Disappointment is, therefore, a natural result, but it is a result inevitable to all originality. It jars with all our preconceived notions, and, until we have a chance to think, we are against it.

The chief charm and merit of Miss Heron's acting is the perfect naturalness of her manner, and the absence of gesticulation and claptrap to produce effects. Her tone and face do nearly the whole work, and her features speak as audibly as her voice. Her best acting is done while listening to others, and no movement of the play, or interest of the characters, escapes the vigilant comment of her eye. It is evident to you that she never ceases to think, from the time she enters till she leaves; and the stoniest spectator will be drawn unconsciously into her woes, and be forced to *feel*. She is not like an *actress* treading the boards with clever pomposity and laborious passion, but a little girl who has caught some half-dozen of you in a room, and, while her eyes stream and her heart breaks, is telling you the pitiful story of her woes. You are very sorry for her; you see her heart wrung with anguish, as if it were writhing in some devilish fingers, and you hear her tortured soul wail for help, and, before you know it, you find something swelling in your throat, and perhaps become a little ashamed at an involuntary blinding of your eyes.

These were the effects of "Bianca," "Juliet," and "Mrs. Haller," while the "Countess," and "Margaret Elmore" though they challenged their share of pathos, admitted to their broader scope the exhibition of pride, disdain, indignation, and revenge. All these passions seem to be equally understood by this extraordinary girl, and our wonder is continually challenged how one who was bred almost as a recluse, and who until within four years has scarcely been allowed to see a play, much less to stir in the rough currents of the world, could so have captured Nature, and laid her open in every artery and fibre to her knowledge. This, however, is the attribute of genius. Dormant within it lie all the qualities of knowledge, and a single hint irradiates the whole. The fall of an apple gives up the complex notions of the planets, and one burst of feeling lays bare the entire mechanism of the human heart.

The most remarkable circumstance connected with Miss Heron's acting is, perhaps, the influence she exercises over her audience—nay, even over the actors who play with her on the stage. Disdaining rant herself, she subdues the tone of every person who plays with her, and throughout the house has substituted the quiet decorum of the parlor for the noise and vulgar bustle of the circus. This attention is requisite to her, in her lower and more concentrated tones; but she so presses it upon the mind, that she often deprives herself by that means of applause. Her audiences, though the most attentive we ever saw, are not applauding ones. She occupies them so entirely that they have no time, and she never makes tricky appeals to those who have. We shall be understood in this, when we say that we have seen her in twelve tragic parts and have not yet heard her scream.

The highest compliment in the way of applause that we have yet seen paid to her, or indeed to any actor, was that which was given on new-year's night, when she performed her great character of "Juliet." When waking in the tomb, and pursuing and shrinking from the ghost of Tybalt with her eyes, that walnut-cracking holiday audience were so fascinated and entranced, that they sat motionless and silent for some moments after the scene was done; and then, suddenly recovering themselves from the thraldom under which they had been placed, they came down in a shower of applause that shook the house. An almost equal tribute to her power was paid on Friday night, when, for a mere look at the "duke" in the fifth act, the whole audience, ladies included, rose to their feet, waved handkerchiefs, and cheered.

Our space warns us now to close. In speaking of the excellencies of Miss Heron, we do not deny that she has errors; but we do not hesitate to state our opinion that she is very much the best actress we ever saw. We do not specify her errors, because we think her mind is so constituted as to be unable to receive advice, and because we think that, after plunging into them sufficiently, her own genius and good sense will correct them in a better manner than could be done by others in the way of teaching.

We predict for her a career brilliant beyond